

Board of Selectmen Workshop
Tuesday, February 12, 2013

A workshop meeting of the Rockport Selectmen was held on Tuesday, February 12, 2013 with four Selectpersons in attendance and the Town Administrator (Selectpersons Wilkinson was not in attendance), Selectperson Murphy arrived late.

7:03 pm Meeting called to order

Purpose and Direction of the Board of Selectmen

Selectperson Fleming said she had really wanted to have this meeting; the last goals workshop was about 18 month ago. She stated that she recommends a quarterly meeting to brainstorm and share ideas/concerns. She made a list of items that over time that she doesn't know what happened to. The Town Administrator stated that she will send out another e-mail requesting the Board Members send any items that are remaining outstanding to her for resolution. There are things currently on the agenda that occur every year and are put on the agenda ahead of time. Selectperson Fleming said perhaps the board should be meeting more often, perhaps more workshops on a Saturday throughout the year. Another option, she said, was to meet every week rather than every other week and keep the meetings shorter.

Chairperson Battistelli stated that the regular meetings, with the standing agenda, are a lot of work for the office. She stated that when she was first elected she wanted to fix all these things, and you need to keep in mind what is realistic.

Selectperson Sheedy stated that it would be helpful for new board members to be aware of the nature of upcoming meetings, so they can be prepared to ask questions.

Previously manuals were distributed by the Mass. Municipal Association; it explained the role, your colleagues, etc. as a member of a Board of Selectmen. A code of conduct was discussed for the board. Selectperson Fleming recently reviewed her copy of the MMA manual. The Town Administrator recommended that Selectperson Fleming bring in her manual so it could be scanned so others can benefit from it.

It was discussed that rotating the chair can leave relatively inexperienced individuals chairing the meeting. Perhaps if the chair is going well it doesn't have to be rotated if they're comfortable in the position. If you have and follow a code of conduct you don't have to count on only the chair to manage the meeting.

Some items on the agenda feel perfunctory. The issue of a civil service applicant filling a vacancy was discussed. Is it truly an interview or just an opportunity for the board to meet those individuals that are filling these town positions?

We are the Town Leaders, but what does that mean to us and what does it mean to the residents. The MMA handbook will clarify this for the group.

Conducting a timely annual performance evaluation for the Town Administrator and getting the Town Administrator's goals ahead of time at the beginning of the year to evaluate are roles of the Board.

Chairperson Battistelli spoke about the goals and objectives of the board. What do we envision for Rockport in 10, 15, or 20 years? What makes up Rockport, what are the problems? Then decide who else needs to be involved (Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, Schools, Finance Committee, etc.). How about a day-long retreat in Rockport to discuss this, open to the public, perhaps in the spring of this year; form a vision for the town and the details can follow.

If we ask the question: What do you love about Rockport right now. When you have the vision for the future, and you solve the problems, the things you loved should still be there.

How can the board members be notified of significant events, in advance of others, in town was questioned. Why rotate/change the liaison roles on a regular basis if again things are going well? How do we track complaints that the Board of Selectmen receives?

Perhaps have more information on the open meeting law. How about at a quarterly legal update meeting.

Selectperson Sheedy said she would like to be notified of any pertinent events, like state representatives being on in town. The board members are not required to attend, but to just know about it.

What is the role of the chair outside of the meetings? They are the contact person; the spokesperson that provides public information.

Selectperson Fleming recommended a newsletter from the Board of Selectmen. We count on a reporter to attend our meetings and write about what they want to write about. Perhaps taking the minutes and putting the information into a newsletter would enhance residents' knowledge about what's going on with the various committees.

How about the Selectmen's corner in the Times and alert each committee to see if there is anything they'd like the residents to be notified of.

Code of Conduct:

1. Respect- intentionally listen and attempt to understand someone else's point of view.
2. Don't "hog" the floor, give others an opportunity to be heard.
3. Ask all the members "are there any other questions"?
4. When selectmen are prepared that is a sign of respect of each other and the time that the office takes.
5. No personal attacks; use civility.
6. Courtesy
7. No interrupting

It was agreed that everyone needs to agree to the code of conduct, or it won't work.

Rules of order for the meetings:

1. When interviewing someone, should each board member have a chance to ask a question? Should the chair orchestrate that practice? It is the responsibility of the chair to run the meeting in an orderly fashion, to be sure that each member is heard, to balance moving the meeting along and ensuring that the business is conducted.
2. What to do when someone is going into greater detail than is needed and tactfully you want to move them along? It was stated that if there were two Board of Selectmen members on the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, that might be helpful.
3. The Chair and the Town Administrator should meet, when time allows, to review information prior to the meeting.

Again the topic of a different location(s) for the Board of Selectmen meetings was discussed. This will be an agenda item on a subsequent meeting.

Workshop Plan and Schedule: A Workshop was scheduled for Tuesday, 3/12/13 at 7pm to continue this discussion.

9:05 pm Selectperson Murphy moved to adjourn, Selectperson Sheedy seconded, Vote: 4-0.

Warrant Signed:

Warrant signed for the Fiscal Year 2013 Payroll and Expenses for the week of 2/14/13 in the amounts of \$ 97,945.39 and \$ 795,328.36 respectively.

Documents Signed:

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